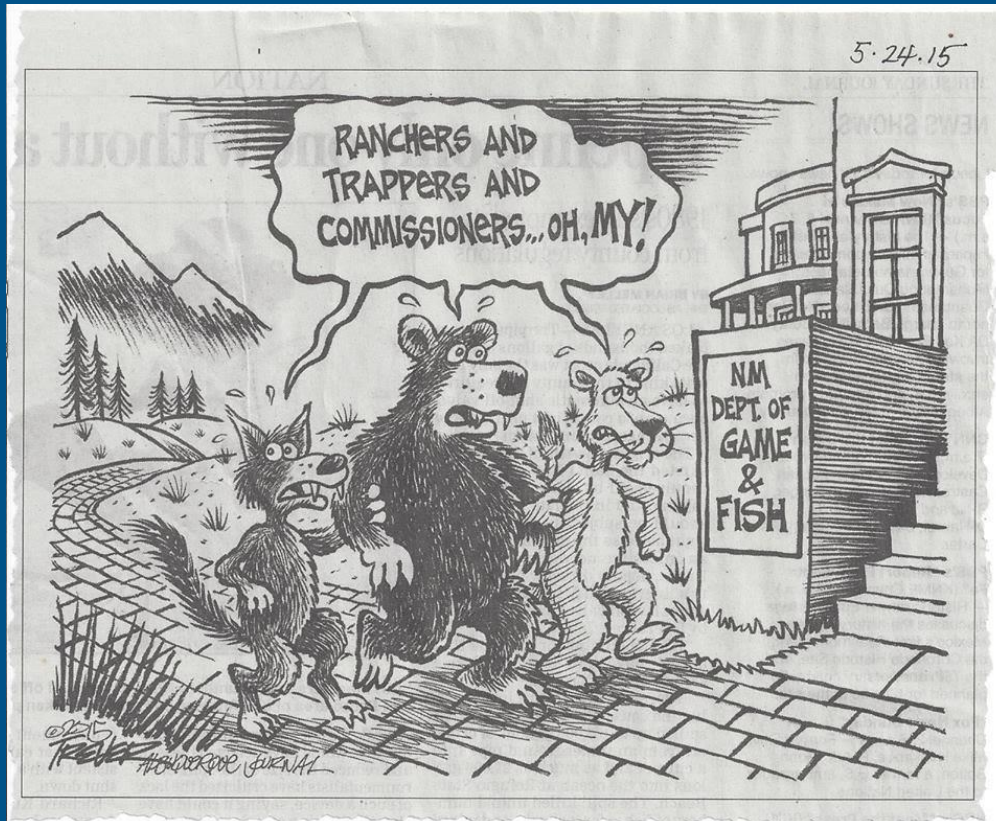




Wildlife Management Reform in New Mexico



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Agenda

- Background
- Game Commission
 - HB 254
- Scope of Species
- Funding
- Overarching Lessons



Background

- Efforts began in 2015 following a series of alarming decisions by New Mexico's state game commission
 - Cougar trapping on state trust lands
 - Increased quotas for black bear hunting
 - Requiring and then denying a permit for FWS to release endangered Mexican wolves
- Coalition of environmental and conservation organizations met in December 2015
- Initial focus was solely on the game commission



Game Commission

Current Structure

- 7 commissioners
 - 5 geographical representatives (4 quadrants plus Bernalillo County)
 - 1 agricultural representative
 - 1 conservation representative
 - “At least one member shall have a demonstrated history of involvement in wildlife and habitat protection issues and whose activities or occupation are not in conflict with wildlife and habitat advocacy.”
 - All nominations are made by the governor
 - No scientific knowledge is required
- Dismissal without cause
- No more than 4 commissioners from the same political party



Game Commission

HB 254

- 7 commissioners
 - 4 appointed by the Legislative Council
 - 1 agriculture representative
 - 1 sportsman/woman representative
 - 1 scientist
 - 1 non-consumptive conservationist
 - 3 appointed by the governor
 - Representing New Mexico's 3 congressional districts
- No dismissal without cause
- Expanded terms from 4 years to 6 years



Game Commission

Issues and Lessons Learned

- Definition of non-consumptive representative
- Legislative Council?
- Geographical boundaries
- Delayed the enactment of the bill until January 2019
- What happens with a bad governor?



Scope of Species vs. Funding

- Chicken vs. Egg dilemma
- New Mexico's part-time legislature meets, at most, for 60 days making large, complicated pieces of legislation difficult to pass, so....
 - Should we generate new sources of funding that will later make expanding its authority possible?

OR

- Should we give the Department more authority, which will create the need for additional funding?



Scope of Species

<i>Taxa</i>	<i>Total native subspecies protected</i>	<i>Total native subspecies found in NM</i>	<i>Percentage protected</i>
Mammals	49	245	20%
Birds	382	534	72%
Fish	30	78	38%
Amphibians	27	27	100%
Reptiles	112	112	100%
<i>Total vertebrates</i>	<i>600</i>	<i>996</i>	<i>60%</i>



Scope of Species

- The Department will require additional funding to be able to adequately manage ALL of the state's wildlife
- Currently, does not have the funds to sufficiently protect and recover species under its authority:
 - \$10-15 million to fully fund and implement the Wildlife Conservation Act
 - ~\$27 million to fully implement SWAP
- Fill gaps vs. blanket authority
 - i.e. all birds or all fish species
- Mitigation policy



Funding

- General Fund allocation
- Other possibilities
 - General Sales Tax
 - Real Estate Transfer Tax
 - Lottery
 - Speeding Fines
 - Methane Capture Rule
 - Lodgers Tax
- Considerations
 - Urgency compared with other issues?
 - What will be palatable to legislators?
 - Other legislative priorities?



Overarching Lessons

- Spend only as much time as needed harping on the problems before figuring out the solution
- What constituency are you serving? Is there a way to broaden your audience?
- Long-term vs. short-term goals
- Form better relationships with commissioners and department staff

